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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA — DESP. NO. 216

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE — DATE September 23, 1957

REF : --

DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUREAU OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS SEP 30 1957

For Dept. Use Only — ACTION: ARA-4 DEF READ TO: OTHER: RMIR-2 P-1 O/O-1 O/OP-1 C/A-1 USIA-10 OCB-1 WAVV-5 LAB-

SUBJECT: The MDN View of Electoral Prospects

There is enclosed a memorandum of a conversation with Eduardo TARACENA de la Cerda, Secretary of Organization of the official party, Movimiento Democratico Nacionalista (MDN), regarding his views on the elections. It will be noted that the MDN believes it will win a landslide victory at the polls.

Based on tentative and incomplete calculations, and assuming a total vote of 450,000, the MDN view of the presidential elections might be conservatively stated roughly as follows:

Miguel ORTIZ Passarelli	350,000
Miguel ENCORAS Fuentes	75,000
Miguel ASTURIAS Quiñonez	25,000
Total	450,000

The MDN has an unusually well organized political machine reaching into the remotest hamlets, some of them accessible only by horseback. In some departments it has close to one hundred branch organizations, or sub-affiliates as it calls them. The opposition has only the loosest sort of party organization.

There is probably some truth in the claims of MDN leaders that Ydigoras has relatively limited ability to get out the vote except in the departmental capitals. If he is to make substantial inroads into the all important rural vote, he will have to create an effective party organization during the month remaining before elections.

For the Ambassador:

William B. Connett, Jr.
First Secretary of Embassy

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 6/4/82
PER Firmes OFFICE ARA
FADRC FOI CASE NO. 5-R-301

Enclosure:
Memorandum of Conversation.

WBConnett:jh

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ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

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From Guatemala

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

September 19, 1957

Participants: Eduardo Taracena de la Cerna, Secretary for Organization - MDN

William B. Connett, Jr.
Benjamin J. Ruyle

Subject: Electoral Prospects

UPA Advantages

For some two hours Señor Taracena spoke rapidly of his optimism with respect to Ortiz Passarelli's certainty of winning the elections. He pointed out that the UPA, which consists of the MDN, the PUA, the FL, the FLAG and the Partido Republicano, is well organized and has its campaign workers busy throughout the country. He said that the smallest Indian village is being canvassed. He stated that the party has some 63 vehicles constantly traveling about Guatemala, blaring out propaganda, putting up posters, and delivering handbills, pamphlets and other campaign material to party workers.

He noted that state and municipal officials are more often than not also officials of the MDN. In a typical Indian village the Mayor would be the Secretary General of the MDN branch, with Aldermen and Municipal Councilmen scattered among the other party officers.

He pointed out that the party insigne is well known in Guatemala and that before election day on October 20 he is certain that it will be even much better known. He stated that in the coming days publicity will concentrate on the party's red, white and blue banner with its "daga dragada" in the center. He added that the PUA's insigne was also well known. Familiarity of the electorate with the party insigne is important, as a large percentage of Guatemala's voters are illiterate and will put their Xes on the ballot only on the basis of their familiarity with the party insigne. Taracena noted that the insigne of opposition candidate Ydigoras Fuentes' party, Redención, is not known.

Sr. Taracena stated that the only department of which the MDN was unsure was Guatemala. He noted that there has been no great interest to date in the capital in the forthcoming elections and he pointed out further that the recent report of the Ministerio Publico, which casts doubt on the official version of President Castillo's assassination, was politically motivated and tended to damage the MDN cause in Guatemala City. He stated that the lethargy of the people in the capital toward the coming elections probably was more harmful to the opposition than to the MDN and that, in any case, the

BJRuyle:jh